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THE COSTUME OF ENGLISH WOMEN

FROM THE HEPTARCHY TO THE PRESENT DAY.

BY WALTER THORNBURY.

CHAPTER I.

ANGLO-SAXON AND FIVE NORMAN REIGNS.



BETWEEN fig-leaves and flounces what an interval! From Cain's wrapping of wolf-skins, which he wore when he hid himself from the Accusing Voice, to a frock-coat of Poole's last cut is a long stride in civilisation. Though whether the tailor and the milliner have much improved God's handiwork may still be a question with all but milliners and tailors.

That in the later ages, before the Romans ebbed back to Rome, our British women adopted the garb of old Rome, there can be little doubt. Remains, still existing, of votive and monumental statues at Bath and elsewhere have already proved it. Women wore an inner tunic, girt with a strophium, or bosom-band, and the stole or outer tunic with short sleeves fastened over the shoulders by a fibula, or brooch. The stole had always, according to Boettiger, a broad flounce at the lower part, and a coloured binding round the neck, of purple, according to some. This stole was the special badge of a Roman matron; and when convicted of crime she was forbidden to wear it. Above the tunic and the stole the Romanised British lady wore the palla, which resembled the male toga. It was a dignified dress, is familiar to us in classical statues, and was suitable for women who probably took little exercise at a time when roads half a mile outside a town were frequented by robbers, and it became those stately stalwart beauties when they visited the temple, the bath, or the arena.

The Anglo-Saxons modified the stately garb, which the ancient sculptors have rendered immortal, into a sort of careless semi-oriental costume adapted for inactive women in a climate severer than that of Italy. Their attire seems subdued by an ecclesiastical character, as if priests had sanctioned its length, regulated its folds, and denounced its exuberance. There is a heavy simplicity about it, from which the Normans soon broke loose.

About the Saxon gunna or gown, tunic, kirtle, and mantle, the antiquaries, as usual, have read themselves stupid, and created considerable confusion. The gown seems to have been a long full robe with loose sleeves braceleted at the wrist, and worn over the kirtle or short sleeveless under tunic which was the ordinary outer attire of the female Briton who, when of humble birth or evil life, sometimes merely wore the looped-up toga above that. The Roman stole and toga, though adaptable to the breezes of Salerno and the soft twilights of Rome, were hardly close fitting enough for the damp air of the fens or the boisterous, sweeping winds of the English wolds. The Saxon head-dress, the "head vail," was seldom worn, except out of doors, and appears from illuminations in Abbot Elfnth's Book of Prayers and the Benedictional of St. Ethelwold, to have been a vail of linen or silk thrown over the hair like a nun's hood or capuchin, and allowed to droop over the fair shoulders in a simple and unaffected manner, the neck and bosom showing but little. For travelling, the Saxon lady, according to a Cottonian MS., sometimes wore a hood (square round the face), the lower part of which reached to the knees. The sleeves of the inner dress for winter travelling came down broad and loose far below the hands.

In a drawing of the Virgin Mary in the Harleian MS. given by Mr. Fairholt, she wears a hood formed by a folded coverchief, the end of which falls gracefully on her right shoulder. Her inner dress is tight at the wrists, but her short outer tunic has sleeves widening at the elbow and jewelled or bossed at the edges.

A line of ornaments also runs down the middle of the dress and round the bottom of it.

The Saxon fair were fond of many bracelets and wore folded bands for girdles. If they required gloves they had mufflers with thumb-pieces but no fingers, but many merely pulled down their sleeves over their hands.

Hair is the glory of a woman, whether it streams down like a cascade of gold on the Danae it adorns, or rises like a diadem which Art has woven for Venus. The Saxon women do not seem often to have unhooded, but they certainly arranged their hair in flat curls which they bound with a fillet; and Adhelm, Bishop of Sherborne, in the eight century, in his description of a Saxon wife, dwells on "the twisted locks delicately curled by the iron," and in a fragmentary Saxon poem called "Judith," that resolute lady is spoken of admiringly as "the maid of the Creator's with twisted locks." The plaited tails of the Franks



Jacob's Family in Anglo-Saxon Costume, riding on Camels.—From a MS. in the British Museum.

and Normans no doubt struck the modest Saxons as bold and immodest. To judge by old drawings, the favourite colours for dress were red, blue, and green, but this may have partly been a conventionalism of the restricted illuminator. In an Harleian MS. copied by Mr. Fairholt, a Saxon queen wears a long red gown which trails over her feet; and has wide hanging sleeves. Round her waist is wound a blue mantle, the end of which is gracefully thrown over her left shoulder, leaving her right arm entirely free.

In ornaments, the Saxons were gluttons, affecting brooches, buckles, and bosses of massy Byzantine character, and not unlike the Norwegian ornaments of the present day. There are still found in their graves scattered over England—the country the Norse won and partly lost—shoulder brooches, or fibulæ embossed with amber, turquoise, and garnet, knotted with threads of gold filigree and embedded in mother-of-pearl. Their girdles were clasped and buckled with gold, and studded with jewels. Their rings were rudely-fashioned silver and copper wire. Like their descendants of the present day, they were fond of chatelaines to hold purses, keys, and metal-ornaments by their side, and they wore decorated sheaths for their scissors, combs, &c. They were also fond of pendant ornaments like our locketts

and the Roman bulla—sometimes gold, and sometimes jewels sheathed in gold.

That the Saxon lady, so often borne weeping to the black Danish ship, was fond of sumptuous dress, the figure of Etheldrytha, Princess of East Anglia, in the splendid Benedictional of St. Ethelwold, is a sufficient proof. The princess wears an embroidered scarlet mantle over a gown of gold tissue, of which the vail and shoes are also made. This seems to have been the



Queen Etheldreda, the Foundress of Ely Cathedral.

splendour often assumed by royal Anglo-Saxon nuns, who thus rewarded the body to compensate for the mortification of the flesh. According to that excellent antiquary, Mr. Thomas Wright, Saxon women dyed their hair sky-blue; but this we are slow to believe. Mr. Thrupp, in his "Saxon Home," sketches a Saxon lady-abbess as wearing scarlet, with violet and red shoes. The face of this outrageous female ecclesiastic, he says, was rouged, and her hair curled over her forehead—while she revelled in rings and bracelets. As for her nails, they were with exquisite taste cut to sharp points to resemble the talons of a hawk. Horrible old creature!

In such costume lived and moved those quiet gentlewomen, so often pious and industrious, who waited on such noble Saxon ladies as Osburgha, Alfred's mother; the pious St. Etheldreda, the foundress of Ely; or Edith, the learned, amiable, and unhappy wife of Edward the Confessor. Such was the mother of King Edgar. That they could degenerate, we require no proof greater than Eadburga, daughter of Offa, king of the Mercians,

who was banished for poisoning her husband; and Elfthrida, who assassinated her stepson, Edward the Martyr, as he was drinking on horseback at the door of Corfe Castle.

The change from Saxon gravity to Norman gaiety and fantasy in dress commenced in the sleeves and the mode of dressing the hair. Pride and wealth demanded more variety and less monastic plainness and austerity. During the wars of William and the quarrels of his rebellious sons, the Norman ladies retained the modest Saxon coverchief, the long tunic and the Saxon gown; but they now laced it close to the figure, wore gold borders to their dresses, and had sleeves which widened at the wrist and drooped almost to the ground. Convenient for reaching across a dinner-table! A yard in length was nothing for a sleeve in the reign of Rufus. The trains also were worn so long that it was sometimes necessary to tie them up in a knot. An illumination in a MS. of the Cotton collection representing the Temptation of Christ, portrays a rueful-looking Satan in this dress; his tail, with a conspicuous sting, protruding from the gown which opens down the right hip.

But the dress of William the Conqueror's worthy queen, Matilda of Flanders, given by Montfaucon, from the ancient portrait in St. Stephen's Chapel in Caen, will show us best the costume of a period when Italian taste was effecting many changes in the English art of dress. She wears no knotted sleeves or long tails of plaited hair—her dark hair is simply parted on the forehead, and falls unimpeded on her fair shoulders—a simple white veil is bound by her trefoiled crown. A plain white stole, without a fold, covers her shoulders. There are no ugly mufflers on her hands, nothing is extravagant or grotesque. This portrait, Montfaucon says, was copied from an original in the aisle of St. Stephen's Chapel in Caen, which Matilda herself built and endowed, before it was pulled down in the seventeenth century. These new fashions, Mr. Wright considers, came to England from Italy and Provence, as did also the somewhat outrageous custom of ornamenting ladies' robes with *plaques* of gold set round with pearls.

In her will, Matilda, queen of William the Conqueror, left to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity, her tunic "worked in Winchester by Aldret's wife, and the mantle embroidered with gold, which is in my chamber, to make a cope." She also be-



An Anglo-Saxon Family.—From a MS. in the British Museum.

queathed two golden girdles, "that which is ornamented with emblems for the purpose of suspending the lamp before the great-altar." She also left the same abbey a large candelabra, her crown, sceptre, horse-trappings, cups in cases, and some lands in Normandy.

The Norman fashions of the reign of Henry I. are chiefly memorable for the eccentric mode of dressing the hair. In a statue of his queen, Matilda of Scotland, which forms a pilaster

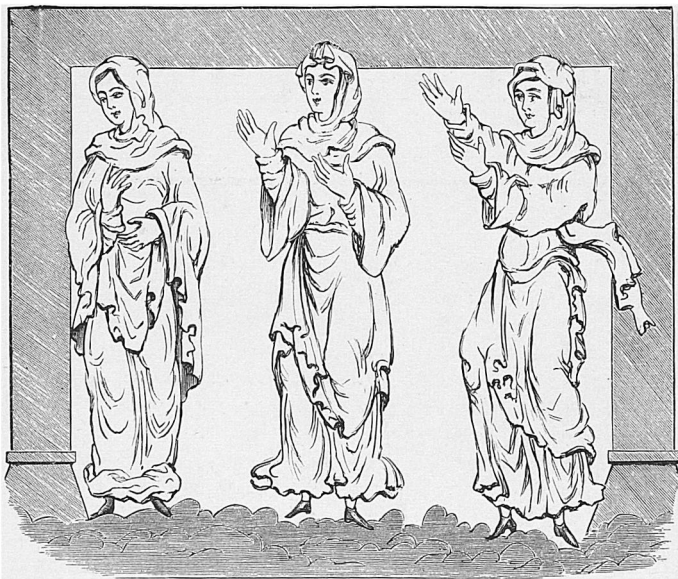
to the west door of Rochester Cathedral, the queen's hair is bound in two long plaits, which fall below her knees. In some cases, according to Mr. Fairholt's examples from old MSS., these plaits all but touched the ground, and were either bound with ribbons, or cased in variegated silk and tipped with tassels. The plaited tails of a woman found in a coffin in Romsay Abbey, in 1839, were only eighteen inches long.

A record of Queen Matilda's usual dress has been preserved



An Anglo-Saxon Conversation.—From a MS. in the British Museum.

to us in a curious old illuminated book, a sort of monastic album called the Golden Book of St. Albans, now in the British Museum. It contains the portrait of the queen, who, on the consecration of the abbey, Christmas-day, 1115, gave the two manors of Bellwick and Lilleburn to St. Albans. The king, the archbishop of Rouen, and many barons and prelates were present at this visit, and this album was commenced in the



Three of the Virtues in Anglo-Saxon Costume.—From a MS. in the British Museum.

fourteenth century, to contain the portraits of the abbey's benefactors. She wears a royal mantle of scarlet "square to the bust," lined with fur. The fastening is a red-and-gold cord, with a large tassel passed through two golden knobs. Her tight kirtle is of dark blue, buttoned down the front with gold. Her sleeves fit close to her arms. Her white veil sits square over her forehead and is bound by the crown, while gold lappets,

called oreillettes, appear beneath the veil and cover her ears. She sits on a carved stone-bench, the Anglo-Saxon throne, on which is a scarlet cushion embroidered with gold leaves and having four tassels of gold and scarlet; a piece of tapestry is hung at the back of her seat.

Adelicia of Louvaine, "the Fair Maid of Brittany" was recommended to Henry I. for his second wife, when, old and soured, he was brooding over the loss of his son William in the great white ship, which struck on a rock and sank as the prince and his bride were returning to England. This lady was of the Lorraine branch of the house of Charlemagne, and was so skilful in embroidery that a standard woven by her in silk and gold for her father, the Duke of Brabant, when captured by the Bishop of Liege, was regarded as an historical trophy. A portrait of Queen Adelicia still exists on a seal attached to a charter that she gave to Reading Abbey. She wears a transparent veil, which passes over her head, is tied in front of her neck, and from there flows over her whole body. The robe is worked all over in a diamond pattern, and seems to fit closely to her shape.

The scanty record we have of the personal appearance of stout King Stephen and his faithful wife, Matilda of Boulogne, is sufficient to prove that female costume in this reign was singularly modest and quiet. The queen's bust at Furness Abbey, which her knightly husband built, is distinguished by



Anglo-Saxon Ladies Hawking on Foot.—From Queen Mary's Psalter in the British Museum.

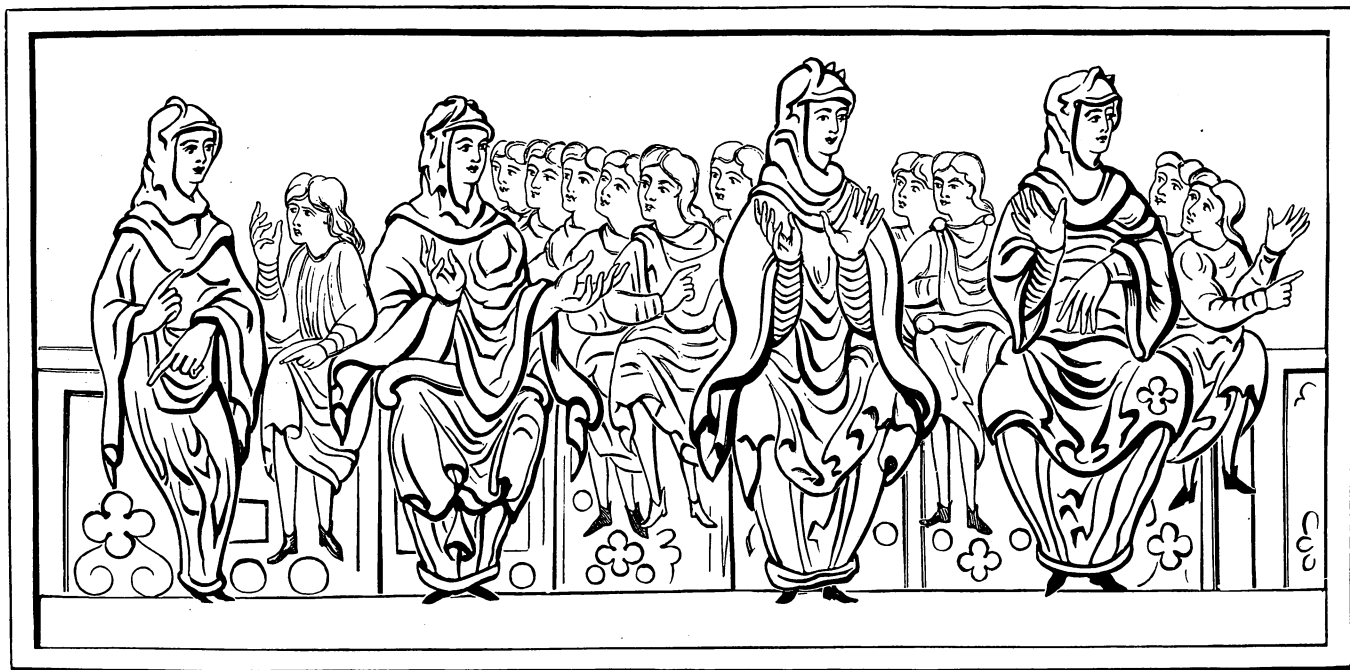
the hair being evenly divided over the forehead, and the plain gown entirely unadorned except by a small mullet-shaped brooch on her bosom.

And now we come to a reign of special luxury in dress—that of Eleanor of Aquitaine, the queen of Henry II. The effigy of this queen, the divorced and unfaithful wife of Louis VII. of France, was discovered by Mr. Stothard in a cellar near a ruined abbey. Her dress shows considerable modification of the early Norman costume. The gown is long with a close collar at the neck, and is fastened round the waist by an ornamental girdle. The sleeves are tight to the waist, where they widen and droop. A portion of the under tunic is visible at the neck, where it is fastened by a circular brooch. From the shoulders falls a royal mantle, supported by a band across the breast, which is wound about the lower part of the figure and partially upheld by the right hand. "The pattern upon the queen's dress," says Stothard, "consists of golden crescents in pairs placed point from point within lozenges formed by the crossings of the diagonal bars of gold that cover the whole service." The virtue of Eleanor we are by no means inclined to defend, but it should be remembered that she did not put to death the Fair Rosamund the mistress of her husband, but that, on the contrary, Fair Rosamund entered a nunnery at Godstone, and lived in repentant sorrow for her sins twenty years after the separation from her royal lover. Her last words to the sisterhood that had protected and cherished her were touching:

"When that tree you see below the window," said the dying woman, "turns to stone, then you will know that my sinful soul has passed into glory."

In the illuminated portraits of Eleanora she wears a wimple or close coif passing round her face and under her dimpled chin, and fastened by a circlet of gems; her kirtle or close gown has tight sleeves, and closes with full gathers just below the throat, which is bound with a rich jewelled collar. Over this falls a pelisse or outer robe bordered with fur, the very full loose sleeves circled with ermine, showing the tight kirtle sleeves beneath. Over all is thrown a square of fine lawn, like a veil, and worn like the Venetian faziola still in use. This could be drawn over the face. The queen's hair, says Miss Strickland, who by no means neglected the millinery department of history, in some portraits is braided and close wound round the head with jewelled bands. This frail queen, who had led a band of amazons to the Crusades, brought from Syria and Constantinople a profusion of silks and brocades, and introduced them into England, even among the ecclesiastics. Her second husband, Henry II., was conspicuous at all court ceremonials for his short Anjou cloak, which gained for him the soubriquet "Courtmantle."

And now we come to a beautiful woman and a good wife, Berangaria of Navarre, whom Richard Cœur de Lion fell in love with at a tournament at Pampeluna, and whom he eventually married after a long engagement. The brave girl was married to Richard at Limona in Cyprus, and accompanied him to the Crusades. At his marriage Richard wore a tunic of rose colour and a mantle of striped silver tissue; Berangaria wore her hair down, after the fashion of brides in those days, and had a transparent veil that flowed from her head to her feet. Her crown was covered with fleurs-de-lis. A good and faithful wife, Berangaria accompanied her warlike husband through all his campaigns, forgiving his faults, and being with him at his death. Berangaria lies buried in the abbey of Espan near Mans, where Mr. Stothard drew her effigy, which he found concealed under some wheat, for the church had been converted into a barn. The bones of the beautiful Spanish lady were lying near it. A canon of a neighbouring church had in his possession a slate on which was an inscription recording the tomb of Berangaria, queen of England, and founder of the monastery, whose bones had been found in this ancient sepulchre in 1672. The flowing hair is partly concealed by the coverchief and the crown. A narrow band fastens the mantle across her breast, while a large



From the MS. Cotton.—Claudius Alfric's Version of the Pentateuch. An Anglo-Saxon idea of a Patriarchal Family.

fermail or brooch, richly set with jewels, confines her tunic at the neck. A new feature of female costume is the small aumonière or pouch which is attached to the ornamental girdle that encircles her waist. This resembles a modern reticule with chain and clasped top, and hangs on her left side. The queen holds in her hand a breviary, on the cover of which the artist has ingeniously duplicated the scene by showing us Berangaria again, and this time lying on a bier with candles burning on each side of her. Queen Berangaria was never in England, and bore her husband no children. Richard would have made his nephew Arthur heir to the crown but for the rashness and folly of Arthur's mother, Constance, who joined the French party then at war with England.

That that utterly worthless scapegrace King John, the oppressor of men and the seducer of women, was a coxcomb in dress we have ample evidence. At a certain Christmas festival, between the hurry of his wars, he appeared in a red satin mantle embroidered with sapphires and pearls, a white damask tunic, a jewelled girdle and baldric, and jewelled gloves. But whether he lavished as much on the dress of the queen he neglected we know not, all we know is that her enamelled effigy at Fonterrand is clad in blue and gold, with embroidered

cuffs and collars, and wears the wimple and a veil. The wardrobe rolls of King John specify many items of the queen's dress—a grey cloth pelisson with wide bars of grey fur; two robes for the queen of five ells each, one of green cloth; cloth for purple sandals; and four pairs of women's boots, one pair to be embroidered in circles round the ankles. But there is no mention of robes and mantles covered with crescents of gold, such as Eleanora, Henry II.'s queen had worn; and King John had too many favourites to have much spare gold to devote to his neglected wife.

The unhappy and inglorious reign of Henry III., which, though extending over fifty-six troublous years, is remarkable for the few changes in the national costume, commenced with the king's marriage with Eleanor of Provence, a clever girl of only fourteen. She was the accomplished daughter of Beranger, Count of Provence, the grandson of Alfonso, King of Arragon, and had been instructed in troubadour poetry by Romeo, whom Dante mentions as one of the greatest Italian poets of his time. Henry had already paid court to five princesses, was eager in his suit for the beautiful poetess, and even waived part of the dowry, no small concession for a man thirsty for money. The magnificence of the dresses worn at the queen's coronation

(the Saturday after the king had laid the first stone of the Lady Chapel in Westminster Abbey), is especially mentioned by the astonished chroniclers. England had grown rich, during the long regency. The London citizens now wore Eastern garments called cyclades, made of silk and velvet worked with gold. When Henry III. conferred knighthood, in 1247, on William de Valence, he was arrayed, says Matthew Paris, in vestments of a newly-introduced and most magnificent material called cloth of Baldekino, which was manufactured at Baldeck (Babylon). It was rich silk, embossed and woven with gold, and portions of such material can, no doubt, still be detected among the faded brocades of old cathedral copes. Velvet, too, is also mentioned about this time. The ciclaton, "a rich stuff manufactured," says Mr. Planché, "in the Cyclades, gave its name to a garment like a dalmatica or super-tunic worn by both sexes. It was known in Germany as early as the year 1096, when Judith, daughter of the king of Bohemia, wore a cyclas embroidered or interwoven with gold; but we first hear of it in England at the coronation of Henry III. and his queen. Furs, too, grew more common and richer, and to the skins of sables and foxes were added those of ermines, martens, and squirrels.

Queen Eleanor was the first to introduce gold and jewelled chaplets for the hair, and she is said to have had countless garlands of gold filigree and jewels. Her state-crown was valued at £1,500, and her whole casket was supposed to have cost her weak husband £30,000—an enormous sum when translated into modern coinage.

The only authentic portrait of Eleanor extant was in the window of a church at Bexhill, in Sussex, and was presented by Lord Ashburnham to Horace Walpole for his Strawberry Hill collection. The royal mantle has a low ermine collar, which is fastened by a square jewelled brooch, and it is bordered by gold lace of a scale pattern. The gown fitting close to the shape, is of gold brocade, with a diamond diaper pattern. The sleeves are cut very deep on the hands, which they nearly cover, a special peculiarity of this epoch. The queen wears no girdle.

There was also introduced a new fashion in this deplorable reign of trimming dresses with long vandyked borders. This fantastic fringe, cut into all varieties of tongues and scollops, is much ridiculed in the "Romance of the Rose," and was no doubt often extremely costly, perishable, and extravagant. These *quintises* adorned small sleeveless upper tunics, and Queen Eleanor wore one with a train which had to be held up. The robes were, no doubt, often embroidered with armorial bearings before and behind, and Mr. Planché indeed notes an order for a robe of the best purple-coloured samite (silk) to be embroidered with three little leopards in front and three behind. The robes were frequently embroidered with heraldic emblems, and those of Henry III. in Westminster Abbey are fretted (cross-barred) with gold, and within each fret is the figure of a leopard.

The fashion of ladies' hair changed considerably in this long and licentious reign. The long plaited tails were disused, and the hair was packed up in nets of gold thread; but these nets were much hidden by the monastic-looking veils and wimples of earlier, thriftier, and more innocent times. The veil and wimple were sometimes, says Mr. Planché, of gold tissue, or richly-embroidered silk, and were often crowned by round caps.

The diapers, too, of Ypres, in Flanders, became now celebrated, and are frequently mentioned in the romances of the period.

In the reign of Edward I. when our kings and nobles arrayed themselves in red silk damasks, crimson satins, and stoles of rich white tissue studded with gilt quatrefoils and filigree, we may be sure the ladies were not far behind. The ugliest portion of dress worn at this extravagant period was the gorget, an exaggeration of the semi-monastic wimple, which we have already described. A figure in the Sloane MS. shows us a lady embarrassed with this choking gorget, which is wrapped two or three times round the neck, hiding that beautiful portion of the body, and rising far above the ears, giving the wearer the appearance of a miserable child suffering from earache and mumps. "I have often thought in my heart," says a satirist of the day, "when I have seen a lady so closely tied up, that

her neckcloth was nailed to her chin, or that she had the pins hooked into her flesh." The same fierce denouncer of transitory folly, also alludes to the women throwing back their hoods, and advancing their horns as if to wound the men.

A series of these head-dresses selected by Mr. Planché from rare instances, presents us with some extraordinary examples of folly. In that of Jeanne de Sancerre (1350), the lady resembles a Knight Templar with his helmet on, with curious side-projections that cover the ears; Jeanne de Senlis, a pretty face peers out from a sort of coronetted cupola; Donna Savelli at Rome (1315) has pins projecting from the sides of her head over which her coverchief is thrown and falls like a curtain; Can. de La Scala (1329) has her head-dress twisted into small horns over her two temples; while in another instance the gorget is strained out as if by wire, and is kept away from the face and ears. These ram's horn dresses were violently attacked by the clergy of the day, who advised their congregations whenever they met a lady so attired to shout, "Heurte, beliers," "Butt, rams." But Mr. Wright considered these satires were launched at the steeple-shaped head-dresses of a later period. Great importance is attached in ballads and romances of this period to the tight and dainty lacing of ladies. "Y. laced small," is always a proof of the poet's approval. The Crusades seem to have introduced into Europe gauze (from Gaza), brunet or burnett, a fine stuff, and Indian silk; while tartan or tiretanus (the tint of Tyre), was a rich purple woollen cloth, mentioned among other places in the "Romance de la Rose."

The amiable queen Eleanor, it is said, first introduced the custom into England of using tapestry as hanging for walls; before her time it had been solely used to decorate altars. The thirteen beautiful crosses her irascible husband erected to her memory are a proof of his very poignant grief at her loss. This queen's dress is especially tasteful, for she abjured the frightful helmet of linen worn by her ladies, with its square visor and awkward muffling for the throat, and the only setting her face had were the ringlets of her own hair, clustering down from under her diadem.

The second queen of Edward I., Marguerite of France, a charitable and good woman, is known to us only from a portrait, which represents her in the dress of a royal widow, swathed in a wimple, which is pinned under her chin, and a French widow's veil. On this veil she wears the crown, while her girdle is studded with jewels.

That evil woman, Isabella of France, queen of Edward II., whom she murdered, seems to have arrived in England with a most costly outfit. Her dresses were of gold and silver stuff, velvet, and shot taffety. She had four hundred and nineteen yards of linen for the bath only, and tapestry for her own chamber lozenged in gold with the arms of France, England, and Brabant. Six of her dresses are especially mentioned, they were of green cloth from Douay. She had besides, six "beautifully marbled" and six of rose scarlet. The king's offerings at Westminster were kingly indeed. The first was a pound of gold fashioned in the likeness of a king holding a ring; the second was eight ounces of gold in the form of a pilgrim receiving the king, in allusion to the legend of St. John the Evangelist giving a ring to Edward the Confessor. An effigy of this intolerably bad woman is to be seen among the alabaster statuettes which adorn the tomb of her son, John of Eltham, in Westminster Abbey. "Her features," says Miss Strickland, "are Moorish, and greatly resemble those of her mother, the queen of Navarre. She wears a head-dress of a most singular type, it is half cowl half wimple, and she took to it during her long imprisonment at Castle Rising. It is flat on the top of the head, but stretches out very wide over the ears, disclosing two curls, and at the back of the head it stretches out like a veil, shutting in the queen's long muffled neck."

In this reign the hair was frequently, however, uncovered, and ornamented with bands of fretwork. Sometimes the coverchief is twisted into a kind of cap on the top of the head. The apron was now occasionally worn in humble life, and is called by Chaucer the barme, or lapcloth.

The splendid and victorious reign of Edward III. led to great

changes in dress. As the sumptuous banquets and tournaments given by the king brought knights and ladies more together, the costumes grew more varied and less monastic. Ladies began to imitate male dress, particularly the cote hardies, or light short tunics, which had come into fashion. The bronze figure of one of Edward III.'s daughters on the south side of Westminster Abbey, is a fine example of the fashion of Queen Philippa's court. This princess has a jewelled band round her forehead, while her hair rests against her cheeks in two straight square pleats. Her plain light gown, ungirdled, hangs in folds over her feet, and her hands are inserted in her front pockets. Long streamers called tippets reach from the upper part of her arms down to the level of her ankles. There are buttons down the front of the cote hardie to the waist.

The ladies whom Froissart describes frequently embroidered their gowns with the armorial bearings of their families, for this was an heraldic age above all others, and they rode to shows and tournaments with pouches and daggers by their side and in parti-coloured tunics, and they affected short hoods with the liripipes or tails of them twisted round their heads. The cote hardie or jacket, borrowed from the men, was faced and bordered with fur, according to the rank of the wearer. The sleeve sometimes reached to the wrists, at other times the coat had neither sides nor sleeves, and the arm-holes, as Mr. Planché says, were "cut so large that the girdle of the kirtle worn under it is visible at the hips," as is well shown in the effigy of Blanche de la Tour, a daughter of Edward III.; a woman described in the

anti-monastic vision of Piers Plowman, has scarlet garments puffed and faced with rich furs adorned with ribands of red and gold studded with gems. Her fingers, says the poet, were all embellished with rings of gold, set with diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and Oriental amulets to prevent infection.

In a drawing of a lady of this period given by Mr. Fairholt, we see a gown covered by a long cyclas, or tight-fitting upper tunic. She carries in her hand her gloves. Her hair is fastened up in a tight net caul, and from it streams the long contoise then worn by both knight and lady. In the romance of "Sir Degrevant" an earl's daughter is dressed in a velvet gown covered with fretwork of pearls, with a sapphire in the centre of each square. Her gown is furred with ermine, and decorated with rows of enamelled buttons. A golden girdle binds her waist. Her hair towers up into a coronet of gold, bossed on each side, and she has a pointed frontal of pearls. In the romance of the "Adventures of Arthur at the Tarnwathela," a lady appears leading a knight. She wears a gown of grass green, and her girdle is of white cloth embroidered with birds. It is enriched with golden studs, and fastened by a buckle. Her hair is braided with gold wire and coloured ribbons set with jewels, and her kerchief is secured by rich bodkins. When we couple with such dresses the blazoned surcoats of the knights, their gilded and sable armour, their plumes, their bright weapons and their illuminated shields, we can gather some faint notion of the splendour of King Edward's court at Westminster, say in the year of Cressy or Poitiers.

SÈVRES PORCELAIN.



HE productions of the National Porcelain Manufactory of Sèvres hold a high rank among that class of manufactured objects wherein Art goes hand in hand with industry. Nor is this world-wide reputation undeserved. All that royal patronage, artistic toil, and universal appreciation, could effect to perfect the products of this celebrated manufactory, has been lavished upon it. And so it has come to pass that a handful of men, working in a damp, dreary building in a suburb of Paris, maintain the superiority of this renowned porcelain, and read a lesson to the china-manufactories of the world.

The first idea that strikes the visitor to the *ateliers* of Sèvres is the gloomy nature of the building in which these brilliant products of this industrial art find a birthplace and a home. A long, grey edifice, pierced with small windows, and bearing the aspect of a convent without and within, vaulted corridors with whitewashed walls and brick floors, long, narrow, chill with damp, and marked here and there, on wall or ceiling, with traces of the shells of Mont Valérien—such is the present abode of the royal porcelain-factory.

Had not the war intervened, it would, long ere this, have been lodged in new and more sumptuous quarters in the Park of St.-Cloud, but the period of its change of domicile remains as yet undetermined. Meanwhile, its present abiding-place is left without paint and without repairs, and is rapidly assuming a dismal aspect of neglect and decay. The manufactory has been established there since 1756, the epoch when Louis XV., having bought out the original promoters of the enterprise, installed the works in their present home, then and for the first time founding the *royal* manufactory of Sèvres. But the actual foundation of the works dates from 1695, a M. Morin having established then a pottery for the imitation of Chinese porcelain, which was the germ of that which has so long enjoyed such wide-spread repute.

At first, however, the Sèvres porcelain was composed only of *pâte tendre*, or soft paste, an artificial composition, admirable for decorative purposes, taking colour readily, and demanding a much lower temperature in baking, but too soft to stand any wear. The enamel with which it was covered, an artificial product as well, was brilliant and fusible, but easily cracked. Such was the composition of the so-called old Sèvres. France in those days did not possess

a real porcelain-clay. Therein Sèvres was surpassed by its Saxon rival at Meissen, the birthplace of the famous old Dresden china. In 1709 the great discovery of real porcelain-clay, the so-called kaolin, was made in Saxony by Frederick Bottcher. His attention was one day called to the softness and unctuous nature of a white powder wherewith his hair-dresser had powdered his peruke. On questioning the man as to the origin and nature of the substance he had employed, he confessed to having made use of powdered clay instead of the regular French hair-powder on account of its superior cheapness. Thus was the precious kaolin discovered, the possession of which was guarded with such jealous care by the Saxon Government, heavy penalties being laid on the exportation of even the smallest quantities. In France, an inferior quality of kaolin was discovered at Alençon, but the pottery made from it was coarse and grey. It was not till fifty years later that Madame Darnet, the wife of a surgeon at St. Yrieix, undertook to substitute for soap in her household a species of soft, unctuous white clay, which she had found in the neighbourhood of her house, and that brought into notice the now celebrated clay of Limoges, and established the manufacture of hard paste at Sèvres. The material now used at that factory is composed of the clay from Limoges, mingled with a certain proportion of a fine sand found at Fontainebleau, which being fusible in its nature seems to lend transparency to the porcelain. After being carefully purified, washed, and kneaded, the clay comes into the hands of the potter, a soft, dough-like, greyish-white mass, which has been worked till on cutting the mass with a wire neither crack nor bubble can be observed in its substance. Then comes the operation of moulding. Most of the smaller articles, such as cups, *tazzas*, plates, flower-vases, &c., are shaped on a wheel by hand. The thin, egg-shell-like cups are produced by pouring into a plaster mould a quantity of paste, diluted with water to the consistency of very rich cream; the mould is then suffered to stand for a minute or two, the liquid is then poured off, and the inside of the mould remains coated with a thin layer of clay, the plaster having absorbed a certain quantity of the water which deposits the clay. The workman then passes a thin, sharp knife around the edge of the cup so as to detach its rim from the mould, and the mould is afterwards set aside to dry. The clay in drying contracts, so that when the process is finished, the thin, egg-shell-like cup is entirely detached from the mould.